

and any new interactions are downloaded from the VLR Server to the user's system **1218**. The VLR Server receives these user assessments and suggestions from a number of sources such as:

When users employ the navigation pointers and descriptions while on-line **1176** and run CB-PDM interactions immediately **1176**, this data is stored directly by the VLR Server **1188**.

When users download the navigation pointers and descriptions to their own systems **1182** where they employ them at any time **1202**, they may interact with the "mobile" CB-PD Module stored on their system **1208** and this data is stored on their system **1210**.

Similarly, a VLR Server may share all or parts of its value data **1178**, **1210** with other VLR Servers or receive data from them **1188**. This type of data sharing enables the propagation of "value location" data throughout a digital environment to represent the experiences of larger numbers of users in a shorter span of time **1190**, **1194**. It may also enable the sharing of data that improves the VLR Servers **1212**, **1214** throughout a digital environment, increasing the accuracy, helpfulness and effectiveness of VLR Servers to assist users of the digital environment **1194**.

Where digital environments overlap and provide common access to users of other digital environments, as some do already, the VLR Servers in different digital environments may share parts of their "value location" data to assist the users of other digital environments.

After a VLR Server has obtained new "value location" data from users **1188** it updates the data displayed to users **1190**, **1194**. This may take place dynamically, in real time **1190**, or it may store the new "value location" data and update its displays periodically **1190** by calculations that are completed at any scheduled interval. Those updates could take place by analysis and presentation means such as those described in the preferred embodiment, or by any other generally accepted method for analyzing data and presenting it in one or more meaningful charts, views, arrangements, hierarchies, graphical maps, sample extracts, abstracts, summary descriptions, hypertext, etc. **1194**. Those presentation methods would be an important area for further research by means of the CB-PD Module **1212**, **1214** to improve their accuracy and value for specific types of users who are engaged in specific tasks to help them achieve their particular objectives.

There are differences between the preferred embodiment and this expression of the invention. For example, in the preferred embodiment the providers of the invention's information were a product's customers; the users of the information were the product's vendors; though these two groups have many common purposes and goals, they do not generally share the knowledge that comes from this invention except to provide improved products. In the embodiment of the invention described here, this dichotomy disappears. The invention fosters the creation of rapidly self-evolving digital environments: Users of the environment(s) both provide value judgments and they see the analyzed data from the users of the environment(s); in essence, the "marketplace" provides the data and makes use of it, becoming "self-aware" in a new and self-determined way. Thus, this embodiment of the invention provides a new type of marketplace "self-guidance system."

VLR Servers that may be accessed directly as marketplace self-guidance systems may expand the value of the present invention. Modern societies have an amazing capacity to generate an overabundance of mediocre information.

Consider that an average 18-year old in the US has spent nearly 50% more time in front of television than in school, and been exposed to some 18,000 televised murders. New digital environments are poised on the brink of providing new environments within which people can be inundated by gargantuan quantities of dubious information. With the growth of cross-border data flows, this information will be generated by a growing number of societies worldwide, dwarfing the current nation-sized communications channels. Without systems like a "Value Locator Repository" so that customers of these environments can dynamically discover and provide clear paths to the most valuable information, civilization may be condemned to a withering bombardment by overwhelming quantities of potentially harmful information.

Once such systems are in place and "value locators" may be looked up or employed interactively during one's work, other ramifications are available: Individual "value locators," or groups of them, could be turned into personal or organizational filters. These filters could enable individuals, workers, business units and organizations to personalize these new digital environments to fit their needs and desires. Consider how such filters could work. Embodiments such as VLR Servers enable individuals and groups to identify patterns of meaningful information, sources, and to download those to their own local systems. With appropriate "gatekeeping" software, these navigational pointers could also provide meaningful filters or search tools. As filters they could screen out information sources not on or similar to these pre-selected lists. As search tools they could be employed to locate additional instances of content or function that resemble those already on the lists. Examples include be a television viewer-controlled system in which audiences have the ability to rate the acceptability of violence in particular television shows and movies interactively while watching them. As a result, each show could have one or more viewer-set indicators or measures on one or more "violence scales." By selecting a filter point of how much violence a viewing household is willing to accept (perhaps by time of day so that adults and children could set different levels), shows that exceed that level of violence would automatically be excluded (of course, viewers could turn on particular shows when they want, or reset their violence scale by altering a control, such as by moving a slider). In another television example, some news shows concentrate on politics, others on foreign events, many local news shows focus on local fires and murders, and what is called "tabloid journalism" offers what has been termed "sleaze." With such a VLR-based system as described here, viewers may be able to set personal filters that pro-actively assist in selecting the type of news in which they are interested, and the best shows in that category as judged by groups of viewers whose standards are similar to theirs. In sum, through the coordinated use of the information in VLR Servers, it is possible to construct readily available systems for personalizing and customizing many types of digital environments.

In an evolutionary mode, the users of these customized filters could make their choices and identities known to the VLR Servers from which they download their filter patterns. By doing so, the VLRs would serve as even more types of repositories for vendors who provide additional material that meets the needs of those buyers (whether the material is a TV show, a medical monitor that could work in several ways, or a software product). Such systems could enable customers to use their combined preferences and purchasing goals to guide vendors in more self-conscious ways than are